United Nations S/2004/928

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 November 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 26 November 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith the final communiqué of the International Ministerial Meeting of the Countries Neighbouring Iraq, the Group of Eight and China, held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on Tuesday, 23 November 2004 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Amr **Aboul Atta**
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 26 November 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic and English]

Final communiqué of the International Ministerial Meeting of the Countries Neighbouring Iraq, the Group of Eight and China

Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 23 November 2004

At the invitation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, an International Ministerial Meeting on Iraq was convened in Sharm El Sheikh on 23 November 2004, with the objective of supporting the aspirations of the Iraqi people, the political process as envisaged by the Security Council in resolution 1546 (2004), including the holding of direct democratic elections, and the efforts of the Interim Government of Iraq in that process. Participating in the meeting were the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Countries Neighbouring Iraq, namely, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Iraq, the Republic of Turkey, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Kuwait, as well as the Group of Eight countries, namely, Canada, the Republic of France, the Republic of Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the People's Republic of China as a permanent member of the Security Council, Tunisia, Algeria, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Malaysia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Also participating were the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the representatives of the European Union.

They decided upon the following:

1. To reaffirm the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Iraq, as well as the relevance of the principles of non-interference in internal affairs as articulated in the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of good-neighbourly relations. They also affirm the right of the Iraqi people to a secure and stable life and to determine freely their future through democratic means and to exercise full control over their natural and financial resources. They committed themselves to helping the Iraqi people to reach these goals.

2. To take note of the regional initiative of the neighbours of Iraq and their meeting held in Cairo on 21 July and consider that their efforts are for the benefit of the Iraqi people and in the interest of stability in the region.

3. To stress the leading role of the United Nations in supporting, as circumstances permit, the political process in Iraq as stipulated in paragraphs 4 and 7 of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). The Ministers welcome the leading role the United Nations has played in terms of advice and support for the process of holding elections, including the recent decision to deploy more electoral staff to Iraq to help with preparations for elections. The Ministers underline the importance of the United Nations continuing to play a leading role, including in promoting national

dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a permanent national constitution by the people of Iraq in 2005. The Ministers welcome the efforts of the United Nations and call upon the international community to provide the assistance necessary to protect the United Nations in Iraq. The Ministers also welcome a supporting role by the League of Arab States alongside the role of the United Nations.

4. To consider this meeting a step towards achieving broader participation of the Iraqi political spectrum, thus contributing to the success of the political process. In this respect, they welcome the efforts of the Interim Government of Iraq and other leaders of the Iraqi community to broaden political participation, by encouraging all elements who reject violence to engage in the political and electoral process through peaceful means. In this respect the Ministers encourage the Interim Government of Iraq to convene in Iraq, at the earliest date, before the general elections, representatives of the Iraqi political spectrum and civil society in order to share with them the results of the Sharm El Sheikh meeting, so as to advance nation-building and national reconciliation with the view to encouraging broader participation in the general elections.

5. To welcome all steps taken so far to achieve democracy in Iraq and to encourage the Interim Government of Iraq to continue the political process by holding general elections before the end of January 2005, to a Transitional National Assembly, which will have responsibility for forming a Transitional Government of Iraq and drafting a permanent constitution for Iraq leading to the formation of a constitutionally elected government by 31 December 2005 in line with the timetable endorsed in Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). They also welcome the commitment of the Interim Government of Iraq, acting in the spirit of national dialogue and consensus-building, to promote Iraq's transition to a united, federal, democratic and pluralistic State, in which political and human rights are observed in full measure.

6. To condemn all acts of terrorism in Iraq and call for the immediate cessation of all such acts in order to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, preserve the lives of innocent Iraqis and display respect for their human rights. To also call on all parties to avoid excessive use of force and to exercise maximum self-restraint to avoid violence inflicted on civilians. They also call on the Interim Government of Iraq to deal resolutely, in accordance with international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions, with the terrorist presence in Iraq and terrorist activities in and from Iraq which threaten the security of its neighbours.

7. To condemn all acts of kidnapping and assassination, including those of civilians working in local and foreign firms for the reconstruction of Iraq, international and humanitarian organizations providing assistance to the Iraqi people, members of diplomatic missions and journalists, to call on all parties to intensify their efforts and to support the Interim Government of Iraq in confronting criminal activities.

8. To call on all parties concerned to take steps to contribute to the stability of Iraq, to reaffirm the obligations of United Nations Member States under Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) to prevent the transit of terrorists to and from Iraq, arms for terrorists, and financing that would support terrorists, and call upon the countries neighbouring Iraq and all concerned international parties to intensify cooperation to control the Iraqi borders.

To that end, they take note of the agreement reached by the countries neighbouring Iraq to intensify their cooperation and note further their call for a meeting of Ministers of the Interior of the countries neighbouring Iraq, as agreed upon at the sixth Meeting of the Countries Neighbouring Iraq, held in Cairo on 21 July 2004.

9. To re-emphasize the importance of following the principles of good-neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations as articulated in the Charter of the United Nations, and also to welcome the role played by all parties concerned, including those of the regional organizations, especially the League of Arab States, to create a conducive environment to achieve security and stability in the region. The Ministers encourage measures aimed at building confidence as related to the situation in Iraq.

10. To reiterate that the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq is not open ended: it will expire in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 12 of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), on completion of the political process. Also to recognize the importance of the consent of the sovereign Government of Iraq for the presence of these forces and that these forces have indicated their commitment to act in accordance with international law including obligations under international humanitarian law, as noted in Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). Also to highlight the need to enable the Iraqi security forces as expeditiously as possible to play an increasingly greater role and to ultimately assume full responsibility for the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq, and to request countries to continue, and where possible increase, their efforts to assist the Interim Government of Iraq in building the capability of these forces, as specified in paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004).

11. To reiterate the importance of humanitarian assistance and providing support for the reconstruction of Iraq, as well as creating the necessary conditions to achieve economic and social development, thereby contributing to the efforts to achieve stability and security in Iraq. To call also, in this context, on all donor countries and organizations to expedite the disbursement of financial assistance pledged at the October 2003 Madrid meeting of the donors committee, in order to meet the priorities outlined by the Interim Government of Iraq, and to allocate these pledges to specific projects for Iraq, and to encourage further contributions. In this context, the Ministers note the achievements of the Tokyo meeting, in October 2004, in broadening further international cooperation in support of self-help by the Interim Government of Iraq, following its own national development strategy.

To recognize the importance of the effective pursuit by the Interim Government of Iraq of its commitment to the creation of fair and transparent and non-discriminatory conditions that would enable all parties to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq on an equal footing and to the fullest extent possible, for the benefit of Iraqi economic development.

12. To recognize that reduction of debt is a key element in Iraq's reconstruction. In this context, the Ministers welcome the commitments made in this regard by many creditors including those of the Paris Club, and call on Iraq's creditors to take steps to reduce substantially Iraq's sovereign debt.

13. To reaffirm the importance of bringing to justice members of the previous Iraqi regime who have committed war crimes against Iran and Kuwait, and crimes against humanity affecting the Iraqi people.

14. To direct their respective representatives to regularly review progress in fulfilling the commitments and implementing the conclusions reached at this conference and to report to Ministers on the outcome of their follow-up meetings, the first such meeting to take place in February 2005, and to consult with the Iraqi authorities on the possibility of convening future international meetings, including in Iraq.

At the end of the meeting the Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting this meeting.